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SUBJECT: DANES CONSIDERING CONVOYS AS POTENTIAL DETERRENT  
TO PIRACY

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Denmark, home to one of the world's largest maritime shipping industries, is growing increasingly alarmed by incidents of high-seas piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa. The Danish government and shipping associations have discussed with us the possibility of requesting Allies already patrolling in the region to consider the establishment of convoys for certain vessels as an additional protection beyond already existing national and multi-national patrols. The Danes, who currently hold the rotating command of CTF-150, recognize that any additional solutions need to avoid complicating already overlapping mandates and missions among the many actors in the region focused on piracy. And, while convoys in particular have in the past met with resistance from some corners of the maritime industry, both local Danish and other international umbrella shipping organizations resident in Denmark suggest that such resistance may be eroding. End Summary

¶2. (SBU) The Danish maritime industry is one of the world's largest. With over 500 ships registered under the Danish flag, shipping has grown to become Denmark's second-largest export earner, with an aggregate turnover of over USD 20 billion. The Danes are thus intensely focused on the growing incidence of high-seas piracy, particularly in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa, where many Danish-owned ships transit on their way to global ports of call. Indeed, following new attacks in recent days off the Coast of Somalia, the Deputy Director of the Danish Shipowner's Association, Jan Fritz Hansen, told the Danish press November 17 that "the situation has worsened in the waters off the coast of Somalia... we need action." Former senior Maersk executive and now Managing Director of the Clipper Shipping Group, Tommy Thomsen, told me November 10 that Denmark's maritime industry is desperately seeking new solutions to piracy. Thomsen claimed that convoys, which the industry had resisted in the past because they increase the time - and therefore cost - taken for ships to transit troubled waters, are now on the table.

¶3. (SBU) Danish shippers' concerns find resonance with their global counterparts. BIMCO (The Baltic and International Maritime Council), the world's largest private shipping association (also resident in Denmark), is increasingly seized with piracy issues. In a November 17 conversation with PolOff, BIMCO Head of Security Giles Noakes (protect) echoed Thomsen's comments, voicing concerns about the overall level of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of

Africa. Noakes said that BIMCO has led a concerted industry effort to publicize and raise the profile of piracy attacks, and has been working with the IMO and others to also seek out and support new anti-piracy initiatives. Noakes pointed to the EU's Naval Coordination Cell (NAVCO) initiative, which would seek to put additional patrol ships in the Gulf of Aden/Horn region and improve coordination among regional security providers (CTF-150, third country patrols, and others). Noakes felt the most pressing need was to increase the numbers of ships able to patrol in the Gulf of Aden/Horn region, but he opined that, for some larger vessels, convoys might now be a necessary option.

¶4. (SBU) Denmark's maritime industry's concerns are clearly on the minds of Danish government leaders, and in particular its defense community. On November 10 I discussed the possibility of convoy facilitation with Defense Minister Soren Gade, who indicated enthusiastic support. In a November 14 meeting, Ministry of Defense EU/NATO Division Chief Joachim Finkielman reiterated to DATT and PolOff that Danish military planners were wondering whether it might not be prudent to consider convoys for some ships transiting the Gulf of Aden. Finkielman suggested that Denmark might be open to working with a limited number of other partners already in the area to organize and escort convoys, particularly since the Danish MOD is also hearing that shippers are now dropping their resistance to the idea in the face of ongoing attacks. Finkielman said that the Danes envision using current command and control structures (Finkielman pointed to U.S. 7th Fleet HQ in Manama) and stressed the need to coordinate existing assets to escort convoys. Denmark is not looking to increase the number of

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national or multinational anti-piracy initiatives active in the region, he said, but to simply make the existing ones more effective. Denmark would hope for participation in convoys from multiple partners, be they CTF-150, individual ships under national OPCON, or others.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: The Danish government and maritime industry representatives are in the early stages of a search for consensus on the use of convoys as one potential solution to the ongoing problem of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa. The Danes, given their leading position in the global maritime shipping business, are ideally positioned to push for this, but they also recognize their limitations. Even as they exercise leadership in CTF-150, the Danes caution that their limited national military resources, and their national defense opt-out on EU military operations, leave them with little option other than to seek out help from larger regional Allies. I believe such a convoy to be a worthwhile idea to consider and have informed Admiral Fitzgerald of the Danes' interest in coordinating with the U.S. Navy on such a convoy. End Comment.  
CAIN